(vi) Review the existing arrangements for estimating employment and unemployment in the informal sector, and examine why the rate of growth in employment has stagnated in the 1990s;

(vii) Suggest elements of an employment strategy focusing on the informal sector;

(viii) Review Indian Labour laws, consistent with labour rights, and with the requirements of expanding growth of industry and services, particularly in the informal sector, and improving productivity and competitiveness; and

(ix) Review the social security system available for Labour in the informal sector, and make recommendations for expanding their coverage.

The Commission has been given a term of three years with effect from 20.9.2004 and has to submit its final report by that date.

Rehabilitation of Child Labourers working in Hazardous Industries

197. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of child labourers in the country which are in main occupation/industries for their employment;

(b) how many of above are engaged in hazardous industries;

(c) what steps have been taken by Government for improving the conditions of children rescued from hazardous employment in the light of directions of the Supreme Court of India in the M.C. Mehta Vs. State of Tamil Nadu (1997);

(d) the total number of child labourers thus rescued and rehabilitated, in the country, during last five years;

(e) the steps Government are taking to strictly implement the Labour Laws to prevent employment of children in various industries and establishments in the country; and

(f) under law could a child labourer be termed as 'forced labour* or 'bonded labour'?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) As per the Census 2001, the number of child labour in the country is 1.26 crore.

(b) Industry wise data on child labour is not available.

(c) The Hon'ble Court, in its judgment had given directions regarding the manner in which the children working in the hazardous occupations are to be withdrawn from the work and rehabilitated as also the manner in which the working conditions of the children working in non-hazardous occupations are to be regulated and improved upon. The status of the implementation of Hon'ble Court's directions is periodically obtained from State Government and the conmpliance of the same is reported to the Hon'ble Court in the form of affidavits filed by the Ministry of Labour & Employment from time to time.

The National Policy on Child Labour envisages a sequential action-oriented approach for the abolition of child labour starting with children working in most hazardous occupations to covering all forms of child labour. In keeping with this Policy, the National child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme was initiated in 12 districts with the objective of withdrawing & rehabilitating children working in identified hazardous occupations and processes. This Scheme was extended to cover 100 districts in 13 States by the end of the 9th Plan. This has now been expanded to cover 250 districts in 20 States in the 10th Plan. Besides this, the Government of India has also been increasing the number of hazardous occupations and processes listed under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 to cover larger number of working children under its rehabilitation scheme.

(d) The coverage of children during the last five years is given below:

Year	Coverage of Children (in lakhs)
2000-2001	1.81
2001-2002	1.81
2002-2003	1.93
2003-2004	2.11
2004-2005	2.03

(e) Under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986, the employers found engaging children in identified hazardous occupations are liable to be prosecuted. For violating provisions of the Act, it further provides for punishment with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three months but which may extend to one year or with fine which shall not be less than Rs. 10,000/- but which may extend to Rs. 20,000/- or with both.

(f) No, Sir.

Unlawful activities among educated youths

198. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the grave unemployment situation in the country and the educated youths are taking to unlawful activities;

(b) what action Government propose to create more employment opportunities to contain unemployment in the country; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) As per the estimates available from the quinquennial employment & unemployment survey conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation during 1999-2000, open unemployment in the country on usual status basis was of the order of 90 lakhs. Out of them, around 60% are educated unemployed.

(b) and (c) Government is targeting creation of around 5 crore employment opportunities during the 10th plan period. Out of these, around 3 crore will be created in normal growth process and the remaining 2 crore through the special employment generation programmes.

Exposure of EPF in Equities

199. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the investments made by the EPF during the last one year and the returns earned therefrom;